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WASHINGTON -- Anxious to avoid a U.S. intervention or cutoff of funds, Pakistan's government is proposing military and intelligence changes that both countries say are needed to counter the growing threat from insurgents, officials say.

Pakistan wants to deploy a specially trained unit of its Special Service Group into tribal areas along its western border. The region has become a haven for Al Qaeda and Taliban forces that increasingly are attacking Western soldiers in neighboring Afghanistan, officials say.

The Pakistani commando division, trained by the United States, is an elite special operations force similar to the Army's Special Forces, or Green Berets. Pakistan has been criticized for sending conventional troops who do not have training in the kind of guerrilla warfare techniques that U.S. officials say are needed to fight the militants in the tribal areas.

"The Americans tell us that they need action now," said a senior Pakistani official who was in Washington last week during Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gillani's meetings with President Bush. Deployment of the special Pakistani force "will meet the American demand of immediate action."

The senior Pakistani official said the proposals were calibrated to protect Pakistan's sovereignty. The government in Islamabad also has proposed allowing the United States to deploy more sophisticated equipment in the tribal areas in a joint effort to track and kill insurgents, officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the classified nature of the actions under consideration and their diplomatic sensitivity.

Coordinating spies

Pakistan's military has told the Pentagon that it is planning to move a major unit of its regular army into the tribal areas. And senior Pakistani officials have proposed a plan in which the

intelligence services of both countries would work to end the conflict between the spies and informants that each uses in the tribal areas and who have often been working against each other.

U.S. officials have accused Pakistan's top spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence, or ISI, of assisting extremists linked to anti-Western activities, including the bombing last month of the Indian Embassy in Kabul, the Afghan capital.

Pakistan, in turn, has criticized the CIA for cultivating assets in the region that it believes are against Islamabad's interests.

"The Pakistan government wants to show that we want to bring terror in our region to an end and that we want to work with the United States for that purpose," the senior Pakistani official said. "But we also believe that there is more that the United States can do as well, and that we have asked it to do."

Pakistan has asked for more intelligence-sharing, training and equipment for its forces, including night-vision goggles and the latest technology for intercepting communications, said Nadeem Haider Kiani, Pakistan's press attache in Washington.

The new coalition government, elected in February, also has agreed to negotiate ways in which the United States could use unmanned Predator aircraft for missile strikes against high-value targets in Pakistan in cooperation with the Islamabad government, officials say.

The United States has launched many of the so-called unilateral missile strikes against suspected Al Qaeda and Taliban leaders in recent years with little or no notice because Bush administration officials believed that some ISI members might tip off the targets. Such strikes have angered Pakistan, especially one last week that came hours before Gillani's meeting with Bush.

Gillani and his aides got an earful from both the White House and Congress about the need to act far more aggressively in the tribal areas.

Some in the Bush administration are pushing to send U.S. forces into the tribal areas. And prominent members of Congress are threatening to hold up at least \$225 million in counter-terrorism funds earmarked for Pakistan, and as much as \$60 million a month more once the new round of budget deliberations begins in December, unless Pakistan moves more quickly and effectively.

Several senior officials would not comment on what Pakistan has proposed, saying that disclosing details could undermine the efforts. Officially, the CIA and the Pentagon also had no comment. One U.S. intelligence official, however, confirmed that some proposals under discussion would allow the CIA to improve its capabilities in the tribal areas, possibly in concert with Pakistani intelligence.

'Certain actions'

Pakistan's ambassador to the U.S., Husain Haqqani, confirmed that various proposals were discussed during last week's meetings, but he said he could not talk about them.

Kiani, the press attache, said, "They have agreed to take certain measures, but it would not be appropriate to make them public, so that the results could be achieved.

"But we are discussing and have agreed to take certain actions to strengthen relations between the two countries and to fight the war against terrorism more successfully so our mutual objectives could be achieved."

The senior Pakistan official said the government is working with the military and the ISI to gain their full cooperation for the proposed initiatives.

"They haven't said no and they haven't said yes," said the official. "It is all very delicate."

Several U.S. officials said they were skeptical that Pakistan could deliver on the proposals given the historical independence of the military and the intelligence agency.

"If what they are saying is true, that is big," said Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Ill., who is on a budget panel that oversees foreign aid to Pakistan. "But they have a habit of making commitments following a high-level political visit . . . and then not following through."